

Four reports of Yellow Rails is the largest turnout since 1995. Sandhill Cranes were widely reported, with an impressive flight of several thousand over Cook County on 16 March. Shorebirds provided a good variety of highlights. Illinois' fourth documented **Snowy Plover**, found at Meredosia Lake, was among the greatest rarities of the season. Carlyle Lake again hosted some remarkable concentrations of shorebirds, including **500 Greater Yellowlegs**, **2000 Lesser Yellowlegs**, **4000 Pectoral Sandpipers** and **15 Baird's Sandpipers**. Elsewhere in the state, **107 Solitary Sandpipers** were tallied in a panoramic scan of a flooded lowland at Havana, and **21 Marbled Godwits** visited Waukegan.

No unusual species of gulls or terns were reported; the most noteworthy record among these groups was a flight of **80 Least Terns** in interior Massac County. Black-billed Cuckoo had another poor season, while counts of up to **74 Yellow-billed Cuckoos** in southern Illinois are the first single-party tallies in excess of 15 birds since the standing record count of 91 birds from the 1991 SBC.

A **Burrowing Owl** was an unexpected treat for a few birders in Champaign County during its one-day stay. See article and photos in this issue. Reports of other owl species were normal to low; poor numbers of Great Horned Owls in particular may be connected to West Nile Virus. An impressive spring tally of **158 Common Nighthawks** in far southern Illinois is surprising in light of this species' decline in recent years. Also surprising was a record high count of **27 Chuck-will's-widows** on 8 May, as the few previous spring tallies in excess of 10 birds have all been SBC data. Illinois' first spring record for **Rufous Hummingbird** was provided by an adult male photographed in Lee County. A record-shattering tally of over **115 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** in Lake County is likely to remain a state record for years to come.

Highlights among passerines were modest. There were poor numbers of Blue Jays and American Crows (West Nile Virus?), while a count of **150 Fish Crows** is 50% higher than previous spring data. A couple of stunning flights involving many thousands of swallows, dominated by Bank, Cliff and Barn Swallows, were reported at mid-May, although actual counts and species distribution are vague.

Sincere thanks are extended to the following observers, who supplied all the data for the 2500+ records included in this summary. These observers are credited by their initials following each record; disambiguating citation forms are indicated where needed. As in previous reports, the sequencing of observers below is based on alphabetization of last and first initials or citation forms rather than on alphabetization of last names: Bill Atwood, Douglas Anderson, Jill Anderson, Cindy Alberico (CAL), Carmen Arendt (CAR), Arlene Brei, Frank Bennett, H. David Bohlen, Jeff Baughman, Joan C. Bruchman, Michael T. Bowers, Nancy Bent, Paul Biggers, Scott Baughman, Steven D. Bailey, Tadas Birutis, Todd E. Bugg, Richard & Sigurd Bjorklund (R&SBj), Marilyn Bell (MBI), Margaret Baker (MBr), Mike Baltz (MBz), David Currie, Elizabeth Chato, Jeff Chapman, Karin Cassel, Melinda Born Chapman, Paul Clyne, Shawn Clubb, Spring Bird Count (10 May 2003), Scott L. Carpenter, Peter Cruikshank (PCK), Alfred Dierkes, Danny Diaz, Donald R. Dann, Karl David, Pat Durkin, Sheryl DeVore, Jason Ebaugh, Darlene Fiske, Matthew Fraker, Robert & Karen Fisher, Sue Friscia, Steven Freed (SFd), David Fletcher (DFr), Urs Geiser, Ann Harness, Brian Herriott, Cary Hillemonds, Caroline & Leo Herzenberg, Frank Holmes, James E. Hampson, Ken Hampson, L. Barrie

For the sixth consecutive spring, populations of Veery as well as Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes were disturbingly poor. A **Variied Thrush** lingering into May provided a record late date for Illinois (see photos published in this report) and one of only a handful or so of records applicable to spring migrants.

Several warbler species logged significantly early arrival dates (see species accounts), with the most extraordinarily early being a Black-and-white Warbler at Carlyle Lake amid the heavy migration of 16 March. The most unexpected warbler of the spring was a Palm Warbler of the distinctive eastern subspecies, documented in Du Page County on 10 April.

Passages of sparrows were generally about par. A tally of 1,380 White-throated Sparrows at Chicago set a new Illinois high count, and 26 singing Henslow's Sparrows at Goose Lake Prairie provide the highest spring tally for northern Illinois. A Blue Grosbeak photographed at a Cook County feeder the first two days of March was wholly out of season and had presumably wintered locally. A remarkable single-observer SBC count of **331 Indigo Buntings** in Union County is second only to the multiple-observer tally of 768 from the same county during the 1991 SBC.

Interesting records among blackbirds included a record high count of **300 Bobolinks** at Jackson County and near-record highs of **80,000 Common Grackles** and **29 Orchard Orioles**. Illinois' first spring record for **Great-tailed Grackle** was provided by a female photographed in Carroll County on the SBC. It was not a flight year for winter finches.

The foundation of this summary is the detailed information on migration limits and populations as submitted directly to the compiler (or indirectly via the Illinois Department of Conservation) by field observers across the state. Migration limits and maximum counts are provided, where available, from each of the three subsections of Illinois – North, Central, and South – as mapped out in Bohlen's (1978) *Annotated Check-list of the Birds of Illinois*. Additional data are selectively included for species and areas of special interest.

Hunt, Larry L. Hood, Mary Ann Hoeffliger, Roger Hayes, Robert D. Hughes, Ted Harms, Rhetta Jack, Allison Klement, Dan M. Kassebaum, David Kvernes, John Koch, Maggie Kurcz, Vernon Kleen, Craig Litteken, Joe Lill, Vicki Lang, Carolyn Marsh, Don Mullison, Dan E. Miller, D. James Mountjoy, Joe Merkelbach, Keith McMullen, Richard Messenger, Mike Matson, Travis A. Mahan, Thomas U. May, Walter Marcisz, Michael O'Connell, Marcella Parunko, Peter Page, Harriet Rylaarsdam, Jennette S. Rader, Marjory A. Rand, Michael L. Retter, Phil Reyburn, Roger Reason, Rhonda S. [Monroe] Rothrock, William Rowe, Alan Stokie, David E. Semler, Douglas F. Stotz, Darrell J. Shambaugh, Eric Secker, Illinois Ornithological Society (field trips), James F. Steffen, Joseph L. Suchecki, James O. Smith, Jeffrey R. Sanders, Leonard Stanley, Midge Saunders, Marsha J. Steffen, Muriel R. Smith, Thomas S. Schulenberg, Wes Serafin, Jeff Sundberg (JSg), Jim Solum (JSm), Janice Sweet (JSt), Berdeau H. (Bernie) Twait, Craig Thayer, Jennifer Templeton, Allan Welby, Daniel T. Williams, Jr., Eric Walters, Geoffrey A. Williamson, Kate Weber, Patrick Ward, Peter Weber (PWe), Allen & Pat Yenerich, Jerry & Jody Zamirowski, and James P. Ziebol.